



USS LST-381

Builder: Bethlehem Steel Company, Fore River Yard, Quincy, Massachusetts.

Commissioned: 15 February 1943 with an all-Navy crew; crew cross-decked with the Coast Guard-manned LST-25 on 25 August 1943 at Bizerte, Tunisia.*

Decommissioned: Coast Guard crew removed on 19 December 1944 and the crew returned to the U.S. on board the RMS *Queen Elizabeth* on 3 January 1945.*

Disposition: Turned over to the Royal Navy on 19 December 1944. Ship was returned to Falmouth, England. Auxiliary generators removed; returned to U.S. custody on 10 June 1946 and towed to Brooklyn, NY, and scrapped on 11 September 1947.*

Length: 327' 9" oa

Beam: 50'

Draft: 1' 6" bow, 7' 5" stern (unloaded); 8' 2" bow, 14' 1" stern (loaded -- at sea); 3' 1" bow, 9' 6" (loaded -- beaching)

Displacement: 1,625 (light); 4,080 (w/ full load of 2,100 tons)

Propulsion: 2 x General Motors 12-567 diesels, twin shafts/rudders

Range: 24,000 nm @ 9 knots

Top Speed: 11.6 knots

Complement: 6 officers, 76 men (originally); 90 men, 36 USN men, 12 officers (including one USN LT (MC)) (maximum); 98 men, 9 officers (final).

Troops: LST had 14 compartments x 9 bunks for enlisted; 20 accommodations for transient officers. Total: 146 troops although most troops preferred to sleep in their vehicles. On one occasion, the LST-381 carried 700 German prisoners from Normandy to England.*

Initial Armament: 6 x 20mm; 1 x 3"/50 caliber dual-purpose rifle
Final Armament: 1 x 40mm single mount; 10 x 20mm; 1 x 3"/50 caliber dual-purpose rifle*

Coast Guard Commanding Officers:

LT James P. Houlihan, Jr., USCGR: 25 August 1943-31 March 1944
LT Melvin L. Stewart, USCGR: 31 March 1944-19 December 1944

History:

USS *LST-381*

LST Flotilla 11, Group 32, Division 64

The USS *LST-381* was originally placed in commission with an all-Navy crew. She had participated in the invasion of Sicily at Gela on 10 July 1943 where she suffered battle damage from German air attacks.

The 381 had been selected to participate in a two-group mission to the India/Burma theater. The six-ship mission was scheduled to depart Bizerte, Tunisia on 1 September 1943. The 381 was determined to be insufficient for the planned mission, both due to battle damage and mechanical problems with the starboard main engine. The decision was made and the *LST-25* was selected to replace the 381 for the planned mission. The Coast Guard crew of the 25 cross-decked with the crew of the 381 on 25 August 1943 at Bizerte. Initially, the plan was to return the 381 to the U.S. for a refit and repair. However the Coast Guard crew, by extraordinary effort, was able to accomplish the needed repairs to the hull, starboard main engine and the 3"/50 caliber dual-purpose rifle. The ship was found seaworthy on 5 September 1943 and was assigned to the Southern Assault Force, Task Group 81.3 for the planned operations in the Gulf of Salerno, Italy code-named Operation Avalanche. The 381 left the Bay of Bizerte at 0623, 7 September 1943 with Convoy FSS2X. She carried elements of the U.S. 645th Tank Destroyer Battalion, beaching on Red Beach, Salerno, Italy, at 1702, 9 September 1943. The 381 continued these operations until 28 September 1943.

She next took part in the assault on Anzio, Italy. Her primary action there was the debarking of British commandos at 0200, 22 January 1944, five hours before H-Hour. The 381 then continued operations in the Anzio-Nettuno area until 20 February 1944. Then, while fueling at Pozzuoli, Italy, a severe storm forced the 381 aground on the rocky shore, causing severe underwater damage to the hull, including flooding of the auxiliary engine room. The USS *Narragansett* took the

381 under tow on 3 March 1944 and, due to severe weather, arrived at Oran, Algeria on 11 March 1944 where she entered dry dock. Repairs took until 10 May 1944 (longer than her original construction time). The 381 then was underway with Free French troops on 15 May, arriving at Port Talbot, South Wales on 2 June 1944.

During Operation Overlord, the 381 made seven trips to the Normandy beaches. She sustained bomb damage on 14 June 1944, requiring repairs from 28 June to 21 July 1944 at Barry, South Wales. From that point on, the 381 was involved in support of U.S. troops during the battles for northern France, delivering vehicles, fuel, ammunition and supplies to Le Havre, France.

On 20 October 1944 the 381 was scheduled to decommission. ON 19 December 1944, at Gowrok Anchorage, Scotland, the Royal Navy took possession of the 381. She was returned to U.S. custody, minus her auxiliary generators, on 10 June 1946. She was then towed to Brooklyn, New York, and sold for scrap on 11 September 1947.

The *LST-381* earned four battle stars for her service during World War II.*

*Information provided courtesy of former crewman Gordon B. Lease.



Donated courtesy of Gordon B. Lease, a crewman of LSTs 25 & 381. He noted that:

"LST-381 Feb 10, 1943, Launch Day, Quincy, Mass. at Fore River Yard of the Bethlehem Steel CO. (LST-380 at the rear) (Launches first)."



Donated courtesy of Gordon B. Lease, a crewman of LSTs 25 & 381. He noted that:

"LST-381 on the beach at Plestin Le Greve, Brittany, France, August , 1944. (Supporting U.S. Army assaults on Brest and St. Nazaire, France -- all we carried was ammunition and gasoline in 5 gal cans)."



Donated courtesy of Gordon B. Lease, a crewman of LSTs 25 & 381. He noted that:

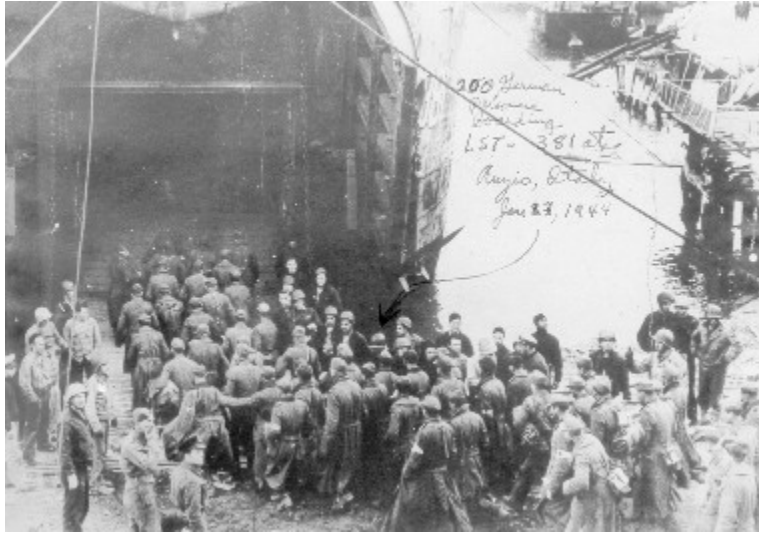
"Photo taken from the bow of USS LST-381, Coast Guard manned, at Salerno, Italy, September, 1943. The tank is a U.S. Army 'General Sherman' medium tank."



Donated courtesy of Gordon B. Lease, a crewman of LSTs 25 & 381. A photo of the officers of LST-381. If you click on the image at left, Mr. Lease identified each officer. Photo was taken at Falmouth England on 29 November 1944.



Donated courtesy of Gordon B. Lease, a crewman of LSTs 25 & 381. The original caption is included in the full-size image. Mr. Lease is the second from the right.



Donated courtesy of Gordon B. Lease, a crewman of LSTs 25 & 381. He noted that:

"The first 200 German prisoners evacuated from the Anzio beachhead were put aboard USS LST-381 on January 23, 1944 and transported to the Naples, Italy area. The 381 was Coast Guard-manned with a 30-man Navy Assault Boat Team aboard at that time."

[Click here](#) to access a copy of the photo that includes Mr. Lease's hand-written identities of Coast Guardsmen in the photograph.



Donated courtesy of Gordon B. Lease, a crewman of LSTs 25 & 381. He noted that:

"This photo was taken aboard USS LST-381 on August 4, 1944, the 154th anniversary of the US Coast Guard. The naval enlisted men were part of an assault boat team which was assigned to LST-381 during the invasions of Anzio, Italy, and Normandy, France."

[Click here](#) to access a copy of the photo that includes Mr. Lease's hand-written identities of Coast Guardsmen in the photograph.

Sources:

LST files, Coast Guard Historian's Office.

United States Coast Guard. *The Coast Guard At War. V. Transports and Escorts. Vol. 2.* Washington: Public Information Division, Historical Section, U.S. Coast Guard Headquarters, May 1, 1949, pp. 66-116.

United States Navy. *Dictionary of American Naval Fighting Ships.* Volume VII. Washington: Naval Historical Center, 1981, pp. 574-742.

